

NEW JERSEY  
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GUIDE  
FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

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Eileen Aviss-Spedding  
Manager  
Professional Standards

Wendi Webster O'Dell, Ed.D.  
Consultant  
Professional Standards

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **PRIMARY RESEARCHER AND AUTHOR**

Eloise Forster, Ed.D.  
Director of School Leadership Programs  
The Foundation for Educational Administration

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### **State Advisory Committee** **Professional Learning for School Leaders**

ANGELA R. BELMONT.....Hamilton Township Public School District  
MARIANNE CHLETOS.....Kittatinny Regional School District  
MARY ANN COOL.....East Orange Board of Education  
TRUDY DOYLE.....Hopatcong Public School District  
H. VICTOR GILSON.....Bridgeton Public School District  
TIMOTHY O'HALLORAN.....Somerville Borough School District  
MARTHA LIEBMAN.....New Jersey Education Association  
ALAN MARKOWITZ.....The College of St. Elizabeth  
LYNNE MEARA.....Plumsted Township School District  
DANIEL MONEY.....BCIT, Westampton Campus  
BRIAN A. ZYCHOWSKI.....Henry Hudson Regional School District

### **New Jersey Professional Education Organizations**

Foundation for Educational Administration (FEA)  
New Jersey Association for School Administrators (NJASA)  
New Jersey Education Association (NJEA)  
New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA)  
New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PAGE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING for SCHOOL LEADERS: OVERVIEW of STATE REGULATIONS

SECTION I INTRODUCTION

SECTION II HOW TO USE THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GUIDE

SECTION III NEW JERSEY STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

SECTION IV STANDARDS-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING  
FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

**Quality Professional Development: Core Propositions**  
**Professional Development Standards for School Leaders**  
**Professional Learning for School Leaders: Design Principles**

SECTION V PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR SCHOOL LEADERS:  
STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

**Professional Learning Orientation Sessions**  
**Training to Support Professional Learning**  
**Resources**  
**School District Study Sites**

SECTION VI THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROCESS:  
DISTRICT IMPLEMENTATION

SECTION VII THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING “9-STEP” PROCESS

**Collaborative Professional Development for School Leaders**  
**Navigating the Professional Learning “9-Step” Process**  
**The 9-Step Process**

SECTION VIII RESOURCES AND IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

SECTION IX APPENDICES

**Appendix A Summary of N.J.A.C. 6A:9-16.1-6**  
**Appendix B New Jersey Standards for School Leaders**  
**Appendix C Q&A**  
**Appendix E References**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recent research about effective schools reveals that when focus is placed upon teaching and learning, school leaders play a pivotal role in improving student achievement. Over the last several years, New Jersey has been involved in strengthening school leadership policies to support this role across the continuum of practice. The state has been supported in these efforts by a grant from The State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) funded and administered by the Wallace Foundation. The New Jersey SAELP Consortium, whose members represent key stakeholders including the professional associations for teachers and school leaders, institutions of higher education, school boards, the business community, and the department of education, developed recommendations to strengthen state policies around the recruitment, preparation, licensure, induction and ongoing professional learning of school leaders. These recommendations were realized in the revised licensing regulations that the State Board of Education adopted in December 2003. The platform on which the array of recommendations rests is the adoption of the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders, which outlines what school leaders must know and be able to do in order to operate as effective leaders of instruction and school improvement.

A professional development requirement was one key recommendation of the consortium. New Jersey's professional development initiative has been codified and is a collaborative model that offers school leaders the chance to enhance their knowledge and skills while attending to authentic school and district needs. In an era of accountability for all students' learning and achievement it is no longer sufficient for principals and superintendents to purely manage the operational elements involved in running schools and districts. Principals and superintendents must practice learner-centered leadership deeply embedded in the ideals of democratic community and social justice. This new vision of school leadership demands ongoing professional learning that is collaborative, sustained and job-embedded. In this context, professional development is not something "extra" that leaders do, but rather a means of continually reflecting on and enhancing their own professional practice.

This Guide to Professional Development for School Leaders presents a research-based model for collaborative professional learning and growth that was developed in concert with the professional associations for school leaders in New Jersey and with input from the state-level Professional Development for School Leaders Advisory Committee. The advisory committee is comprised of chief school administrators, principals and supervisors as well as teacher, school board and higher education representatives. The committee advises the Commissioner on the School Leader Professional Development initiative.

This guide offers support for designing and implementing a professional growth plan. The design and implementation is outlined in a nine-step process that is carried out in three phases:

### Phase 1: Contemplation

- School leaders reflect individually on their own knowledge and skills in relation to the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders. They use a self-assessment process to formulate professional development goals that align their own learning with school and/or district needs. Principals and supervisors consult with their chief school administrator or designee on their professional goals. School leaders then draft professional growth plans that: articulate their individual goals and the relationship to their school/district needs; outline activities that will accomplish those goals over a multi-year period; and establish evidence to benchmark and measure the accomplishment of their goals.

## Phase 2: Collaboration

(Phase 2 is different in respect to the certificate under which a school leader is working and the length of the school leaders' contract.)

- Principals and supervisors – Principals and supervisors collaborate with self-selected peer review committees to help them ensure that their plans are rigorous, attainable and aligned with the professional standards for school leaders. The purpose of peer committees is to provide “critical friend” support for the development and implementation of their plans. Generally, a peer committee will meet at the beginning of a cycle to consult on the establishment of a plan and again throughout the cycle to provide support and feedback to the school leader. At the end of the cycle they will meet to review how the plan has been successfully implemented. The professional growth plan cycle for principals and supervisors is three years.
- Superintendents and assistant superintendents – Staff members working under the school administrator certificate consult on their professional goals and collaborate on their professional growth plans with either self-selected peer review committees or with a regional committee organized by the New Jersey Association of School Administrators. As with the principals and supervisors, the peer review committees help leaders ensure that their plans are aligned with the professional standards for school leaders and support the school leader in the development and implementation of their goals. The plan cycle for superintendents and assistant superintendents is three-to-five years, depending on the length of the contract.

## Phase 3: Implementation

- School leaders carry out their plans and, in that process, assemble the evidence (artifacts, work samples, meeting minutes, memos, etc.) that illustrates their progress toward their goals. Completed plans are reviewed by the leader's peer review committee and completion is certified by the district superintendent or designee for principals and supervisors, or by the NJ Association of School Administrators for those working under the school administrator certificate. The plan certification process involves presenting the evidence and a brief summative narrative detailing the plan goals, completion process and outcomes. The final step in the implementation phase is to reflect on the work done under the plan and use it in shaping the goals and activities for the next professional growth plan.
- The Commissioner has established the 2004-2005 school year as a developmental year for this initiative during which the Department of Education, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, and the Foundation of Educational Administration will offer orientation and training, solicit feedback and provide implementation guidance and technical assistance as the state moves toward full implementation of this initiative. The Professional Development Advisory Committee will address key issues that arise during implementation. The first professional growth plans, which are the framework for navigating this process, must be ready for implementation not later than July 1, 2005.

Under this initiative, all staff practicing under principal, supervisor or school administrator certifications must participate in ongoing professional learning. School business officials are exempt from these regulations as their role is not one of instructional leadership.

The new professional development initiative offers a fresh opportunity to support school leader's learning in New Jersey. Professional development is a powerful means to support school leaders' growth as instructional leaders, ensuring that they have the tools to enhance teaching, learning and growth in student achievement in their schools and districts.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING for NEW JERSEY'S SCHOOL LEADERS: OVERVIEW OF STATE-REGULATIONS

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 16-6A:9-16.1-6, all school leaders whose position requires certification as school administrator, principal or supervisor must complete a standards-based professional development program, which includes the creation, implementation and completion of an individualized professional growth plan over a three to five year professional development cycle. The main points of the applicable Code are summarized in Appendix A.

### **Professional Growth Plan (PGP)**

The state-required Professional Growth Plan **MUST** address professional growth goals that are:

- Aligned with *NJ Standards for School Leaders*  
AND
- Explicitly linked to specific district and/or school objectives to improve the quality of teaching and learning and increase student achievement.

### **The Peer Review Process**

**Each school leader selects a Peer Review Committee (PRC), which works as a collaborative group that will:**

- Provide him/her with ongoing support and constructive feedback regarding the specific activities planned to achieve their professional development goals;
- Assure that the PGP complies with *NJ Standards for School Leaders*; and
- Provide constructive feedback related to progress in plan implementation and goal attainment.

**Each school leader will:**

- Select a Peer Review Committee, which is composed of three or more peers who may be from within and/or outside his/her district;
- Identify one or more professional development goals in consultation with his/her superintendent for those in positions requiring principal or supervisor certification, or in consultation with his/her Peer Review Committee for those in positions requiring school administrator certification.
- Submit drafts of his/her professional development goals and Professional Growth Plan to his/her Peer Review Committee for review, constructive feedback, and subsequent modification as appropriate;

### **Providing Evidence of PGP Fulfillment**

Evidence of PGP fulfillment includes a narrative account detailing plan goals and their achievement, and documentation related to professional growth activities (e.g. participation in professional development activities and completion of job-embedded learning opportunities, such as action research and study groups).

**Each school leader will provide evidence of Professional Growth Plan fulfillment:**

- To the superintendent at the end of a three year cycle, for those in positions requiring principal and supervisor certification;
- To a self-selected Peer Review Committee coordinated by the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA) at the end of a three to five year cycle depending on the length of their employment contracts, for those in positions requiring school administrator certification.

**Each school leader must:**

- Receive certification of Professional Growth Plan fulfillment from his/her superintendent;
- Receive a recommendation for certification of Professional Growth Plan completion from his/her Peer review Committee to NJASA, which then certifies plan completion to the NJDOE and local board of education.

## SECTION I INTRODUCTION

### National and State Support for School Leaders

Over the past several decades, efforts to improve schools and enhance student learning have been focused on rigorous student standards, strengthened assessments, accountability systems for student results, and improved teacher quality. Recent research on effective schools reveals that when their focus is placed upon teaching and learning, school leaders play a pivotal role in improving student achievement. Recognizing the importance of this issue, the DeWitt-Wallace Foundation sponsored a national grant program to encourage states to develop policies to improve school leadership. In 2000, New Jersey was selected as one of fifteen states to receive a State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP) grant to engage state policy reform to improve school leadership at state, district, and school levels.

A state-level NJ SAELP Consortium comprised of key stakeholders from government, higher education, professional associations, and the business community deliberated and reached consensus on key policy reforms to strengthen the preparation, recruitment and development of school leaders in support of school improvement and teaching and learning. By the end of 2003, the New Jersey SAELP Consortium proposed a range of policy recommendations to improve school leadership in New Jersey including legislative and/or regulatory action. These recommendations led to changes in the New Jersey Administrative Code. In December 2003 the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the *New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders*. The standards are based on national standards developed by the *Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)*. a standards-based licensure system for school leaders that aligns preparation, licensure, induction, and continuing professional development. Continued funding from the Wallace Foundation for NJ SAELP II (2004-2007) will support systematic statewide implementation of these state initiatives and will facilitate study of their impact on improving school leadership practice and student achievement in New Jersey.

### Professional Development for School Leaders

The role of the school leader has changed significantly over recent years and is extremely challenging. It requires that school leaders' knowledge, skills, and practice keep pace with an ever-changing and ever-growing knowledge base, and that school leaders continually renew themselves through lifelong learning. School leaders need to continue their professional development in support of instructional leadership that will improve schools, teaching, and student achievement. To that end, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted a research-based professional development requirement that engages all school leaders in the state in individualized, standards-based, collaborative, and job-embedded professional learning experiences that are linked to improving teaching and learning.

Effective September 2004, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 6A:9-16.1-6 (See [Appendix A](#)), all school leaders in public and charter as well as non-public schools whose position requires certification as school administrator, principal, or supervisor must complete an individualized program of professional development, which includes creation, implementation and completion of an individualized professional growth plan over a multi-year professional development cycle. The state's professional development requirement is differentiated for positions that require school administrator certification (i.e. superintendents and assistant superintendents) and positions that require principal and supervisor certification (i.e. principal, director, and supervisor). Differences in the process for each group center primarily on the length of the professional development cycle, consultation on the development and implementation of the professional growth plan, the peer review process, and certification of professional growth plan completion. An overview of the professional development process for all school leaders is presented in [Section VII](#), *The New Jersey Professional Learning 9-Step Process for School Leaders*.



## SECTION II

### HOW TO USE THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GUIDE

The *New Jersey Professional Learning Guide for School Leaders* is intended to support thoughtful implementation of New Jersey's standards-based professional development requirement for all school leaders at the state, district, and school level. The Professional Learning Guide is designed to provide districts with the information and resources needed to successfully implement standards-based professional development for school leaders that not only meets state requirements but also addresses the unique context and needs of each district and school, and its staff and students.

The Professional Learning Guide may be used by school districts to:

- Systematically examine existing district policies and structures, and district readiness to effectively implement standards-based professional development for school leaders;
- Develop and implement a professional development strategic plan that systematically addresses and supports standards-based professional development for school leaders as required by the state;
- Develop, implement, and sustain research-based professional development opportunities for school leaders that are directly linked to enhancing leadership practices and improving schools, programs, teaching, and learning;
- Assist individual school leaders in focusing their specific professional growth goals on outcomes related to improving schools, programs, teaching and learning;
- Engage individual school leaders in a collaborative professional development process that is designed to enhance their professional growth and leadership practice, and to improve programs, schools, teaching, and learning;
- Evaluate and modify existing district professional development plans to determine their effectiveness and impact on school leaders' professional growth and outcomes related to improving programs, schools, teaching, and learning.

The Professional Learning Guide for School Leaders is formatted to provide district and school leaders with essential information and resources needed to:

- Understand state professional development requirements for school leaders;
- Align their district and school professional development plans with New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders and research-based professional development;
- Align school leader's individualized professional growth plans with state professional development requirements and the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders;
- Implement and sustain a standards-based collaborative process of individualized professional development for school leaders that meets state requirements.

While the Professional Learning Guide provides a detailed description of a systematic standards-based collaborative professional development process that addresses state requirements, it is not intended to be a set of prescriptions to be strictly followed. The Professional Learning Guide should be considered a flexible framework for examining existing professional development practices. It should be used as a tool to: (1) stimulate dialogue regarding standards-driven school leadership practice and professional development for school leaders; and (2) plan and develop professional development opportunities for school leaders that strengthen leadership, teaching and learning.

### SECTION III

#### NEW JERSEY PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

In December 2003, the State Board of Education adopted the *Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders* as the *New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders*. New Jersey is currently engaged in embedding these standards in state policies and regulations to guide the preparation, licensure, and professional development of school leaders as a continuum of school leadership practice at state, district and school levels. The state's standards-based continuum of school leadership practice contributes to the overall standards-based educational reform agenda in New Jersey and is intended to assure that school leaders have the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions to drive continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and student achievement in their schools and school districts. (Visit <http://www.nj.gov/njded/profdev/profstand/standards.pdf> for details)

#### *The New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders*

*A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by:*

- Standard #1** Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community;
- Standard #2** Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
- Standard #3** Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
- Standard #4** Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
- Standard #5** Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and
- Standard #6** Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

### SECTION IV

#### STANDARDS-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

In addition to the *New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders*, the state's professional development process is grounded in core propositions and national standards for quality professional development, which formed the basis for the state's professional learning process presented in detail in Section VII of the Guide.

#### *Core Propositions*

##### *Quality Professional Development:*

1. Establishes effective teaching and learning and the improvement of student achievement as the central activities of the district and schools and the core responsibility of school leaders.
2. Engages all school leaders in thoughtfully planned, continuing professional development that is integrated with district and school goals, professional growth plans, and plans to improve teaching and student achievement.
3. Promotes collegiality and a process for collaboration with other professionals, especially peers, to achieve organizational goals while meeting individual professional growth needs.
4. Models effective practices and processes for adult learning that lead to and highlight outcomes related to continuing professional growth, i.e. continual self-assessment and reflection, risk-taking and development of improvement strategies and products, use of meaningful feedback from colleagues, and acquisition of new knowledge.
5. Incorporates measures of performance and accountability that are reflected in the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders and emphasize the important challenges faced by school leaders as valued professional development outcomes.

## Professional Development Standards for School Leaders

The professional development standards developed by the *National Staff Development Council (NSDC)* define quality professional development for school leaders and guide the development and implementation of the New Jersey Professional Learning process for school leaders at the state and local level. (For more information visit <http://www.nsd.org/standards/learningcommunities.cfm>)

### THE NSDC STANDARDS

- I. LEARNING COMMUNITIES  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.
- II. LEADERSHIP  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.
- III. RESOURCES  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.
- IV. DATA-DRIVEN  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
- V. EVALUATION  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.
- VI. RESEARCH-BASED  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to apply research to decision making.
- VII. DESIGNS AND STRATEGIES  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.
- VIII. LEARNING  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change.
- IX. COLLABORATION SKILLS  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.
- X. EQUITY  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.
- XI. QUALITY TEACHING  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.
- XII. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT  
Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

## Professional Learning for School Leaders: Design Principles

The design principles for New Jersey's Professional Learning for School Leaders Process are based on the previously described core propositions, NSDC Professional Development Standards, and the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders. These design principles:

1. Assume competence of school leaders and focus on continual professional growth to enhance their knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performance based on the *New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders*. The process is not intended to contribute to or be a part of school leaders' performance evaluations.
2. Require school leaders to be lifelong learners who take personal responsibility for their continuing professional development and recognize that it is integral to meeting the larger goal of continuous improvement of teaching and student achievement.
3. Emphasize professional development as a collaborative process.
4. Require continuous and sustained professional development.
5. Require adaptation to the unique contexts and educational settings of the schools and districts, and the needs of individual school leaders.
6. Promote a general process that is appropriate for all school leaders (i.e. new and experienced, principals and superintendents), and encourage adaptations to address unique needs.
7. Require close integration of professional development and performance of day-to-day responsibilities with district/school goals and improvement plans.
8. Require an environment of trust in which school leaders feel comfortable in taking risks, exploring new ideas, and implementing innovative practices that enhance their continuing professional growth and promote continual improvement of schools, teaching, and student achievement.
9. Emphasize accountability throughout the process through periodic peer reviews and documentation of the fulfillment of professional growth plans, including professional development goals and intended outcomes.
10. Assume that the professional development process will be widely supported at state, district, and school levels with relevant policies, technical assistance, and resources.

## SECTION V PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR SCHOOL LEADERS: STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

### Professional Learning Orientation Sessions

Statewide *Orientation Sessions* for school district personnel will be conducted on a continuing basis by the *Foundation for Educational Administration (FEA)* and *New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA)* in collaboration with the *New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)*. Orientation sessions will be regularly scheduled at regional sites to introduce school district personnel who are responsible for implementation of the New Jersey Professional Learning for school Leaders process in their districts. Orientation Sessions will focus on developing a sound understanding of the state's professional development requirement for school leaders, the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders, and use of the Professional Learning Guide and recommended resources and implementation tools.

### Training to Support Professional Learning

Training sessions will be conducted on a regular basis at regional sites to support district implementation of New Jersey's Professional Learning for School Leaders process. These sessions will be provided by trainers/facilitators who will be trained by FEA and NJASA.

*Training sessions for targeted groups will focus on, but are not limited to:*

1. Developing depth and breadth of understanding of the *New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders* and the *New Jersey Professional Development Standards*;
2. Creating district strategic plans and school improvement plans that focus on improving schools, teaching, and student achievement based on the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards*;
3. Developing individualized standards-based professional growth plans that are linked to improving schools, teaching, learning, and student achievement;
4. Collecting, organizing, and presenting artifacts and data that provide evidence of professional growth plan fulfillment and outcomes related to professional growth and improvement of schools, teaching, and learning;
5. Developing collaboration skills and collegial support through collaborative learning, professional discourse, peer review, feedback, and group reflection;
6. Developing reflective practice for continuing professional growth (e.g. self-assessment and reflective processes);
7. Understanding strategies for standards-based professional development (i.e. action research, study groups, inter-/intra-district visitations, using technology to access resources).

### Resources

The Professional Learning Guide references numerous resources and “tools” that are intended to guide and support district and school leaders as they implement New Jersey’s professional development requirement for school leaders at district and school levels.

Resources are intended to provide information and research that will be helpful to district and school leaders as they implement the Professional Learning for School Leaders process (i.e. books, professional organizations and publications, and websites). Resources are included in Section VIII and the Appendices of the Professional Learning Guide.

Implementation Tools (i.e. templates, how-to sheets, exemplars, and scenarios) are designed for use with the Guide to facilitate implementation of the Professional Learning process. Implementation Tools are presented in Section VIII of the Guide.

The Professional Learning for School Leaders Website (www.\_\_\_\_) provides current information, updates, and resources to support Professional Learning for School Leaders and provides an opportunity for district personnel to ask questions and clarify information on-line at \_\_\_\_.

### Study Sites

Several school districts across the state will serve as sites to study the implementation of the New Jersey Professional Learning for School Leaders Process. Data will be collected and analyzed related to development of plans, strategies, resources and materials to implement the Professional Learning process. This data will be used to evaluate and improve the Professional Learning Process, the Professional Learning Guide, and statewide plans for implementation and training. Exemplars for effective practices and “lessons learned” from the sites will also be disseminated to districts statewide to share models and strategies that prove to be effective.

## SECTION VI

### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

#### FOR SCHOOL LEADERS: DISTRICT IMPLEMENTATION

The Professional Learning for School Leaders process is designed to be adapted to the unique needs of individual districts, schools, and school leaders. To this end, recommendations are made to guide districts in assessing, building upon, and aligning their existing professional development programs with state requirements and standards. It is essential that the school district assesses its readiness to effectively implement collaborative professional learning for school leaders and routinely evaluates implementation of the process and its impact on teaching and learning.

Following are essential steps for districts to take as they plan and implement the Professional Learning for School Leaders process:

- #1 Affirm systemic commitment of board of education and district leaders to establish a culture that supports high quality, standards-based professional development for school leaders (e.g. readiness for professional collaboration, level of trust, openness to honest feedback).
- #2 Conduct an assessment of district readiness (i.e. resources, structures, policies, contractual agreements) to implement and support high-quality, standards-based professional development for school leaders.
- #3 Establish district policies, resources, structures, contractual agreements, and quality assurances needed to successfully implement, monitor, evaluate, and sustain high quality, standards-based professional development for school leaders
- #4 Develop a district evaluation plan designed to formatively and summatively evaluate implementation and results of New Jersey Professional Learning for School Leaders process.
- #5 Revise district and school professional development plans as needed to ensure effective implementation of the New Jersey Professional Learning for School Leaders process.

For a listing of resources, visit <http://www.nsdc.org/standards/resources.cfm>

## SECTION VII

### THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING 9-STEP PROCESS for SCHOOL LEADERS

## COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING for SCHOOL LEADERS

The standards-based, job-embedded, collaborative Professional Learning process described in this section applies to school leaders whose positions require certification as a school administrator, principal or supervisor. The process is intended to guide and nurture collegial support and collaboration among school leaders to achieve individual professional development goals that have the potential for positive impact on district and school goals for improving the quality of teaching and learning and increasing student achievement.

The requirement for individualized Professional Growth Plans (PGPs), unlike goal setting procedures used for evaluation, is not designed to focus on basic minimum competency (i.e. satisfactory or needs to improve job performance) but rather to support all school leaders to meet the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders with a distinct focus on increasing their capacity to effectively function as instructional leaders who continuously improve teaching and learning.

Individualized Professional Growth Plans are intended to reflect a high degree of collaboration within districts between the superintendent and school leaders as well as among peer groups to achieve a combined effect of promoting joint action and support for achieving both individual professional development goals and district and school goals for improving the quality of teaching and learning and increasing student achievement.

The collaborative process described in this section is designed to build upon and supplement existing professional development activities in which school leaders are currently engaged, and to focus job-embedded professional development of school leaders on enhancing their leadership practice and ability to effectively perform their day to day responsibilities, and also address the specific needs and tasks related to improving their districts and schools, and teaching and learning.

## NAVIGATING THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING “9-STEP” PROCESS

The New Jersey Professional Learning “9-Step” Process is designed to provide a comprehensive and detailed, step-by-step approach for school districts and individuals that will help them to effectively implement the state’s professional development requirements for school leaders. The New Jersey Professional Learning 9-Step Process is intended to be used as a guide -- not a set of prescriptive steps.

The New Jersey Professional Learning 9-Step Process is designed to be used by all school leaders affected by the state’s professional development requirement. Color Coding is used to highlight the similarities and differences in the process as appropriate for each affected group. **RED** is used to denote areas that relate specifically to those in positions requiring school administrator certification, and **BLUE** is used to denote areas that relate specifically to those in positions that require principal or supervisor certification. Areas that apply to both groups are presented in **BLACK**.

Each of the 9 Steps is presented separately. A brief **Overview** of the process for each step is followed by a listing of **Key Resources** and a graphic that carefully presents each recommended **Activity** within each step. Arrows easily lead you from one activity to the other, and to suggested **Tips** and **Guiding Questions** related to each activity. The format also provides references to **Resources** that are applicable to specific steps in the process for information and support (i.e. websites, professional organizations, journals, books).



STEP #1  
GETTING FOCUSED: ASSESSING YOUR INDIVIDUAL  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS, READINESS, and COMMITMENT

## Overview

The first step in the preparation of your individualized Professional Growth Plan is the determination of your professional development needs. In determining those needs it is important to self assess and reflect upon your current level of skills and knowledge and your capacity to effectively perform in your role as a school leader based on the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders.

It will be helpful to complete a self-assessment aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders. You will want to supplement the results of any self-assessment with feedback you may have received formally or informally from colleagues and others in your school/district community.

After analyzing your self-assessment, you will need to determine priority areas for professional development in preparation for selection of one or more professional development goals **in consultation with your superintendent if you are in a position that requires principal or supervisor certification, or with your Peer Review Committee if you are in a position that requires school administrator certification.** It would be helpful for you to prioritize your list of professional growth areas based on those that will have the greatest potential to enhance your leadership practice and ability to improve the quality of teaching and learning and increase student achievement in your department, school, or district.

## KEY RESOURCES

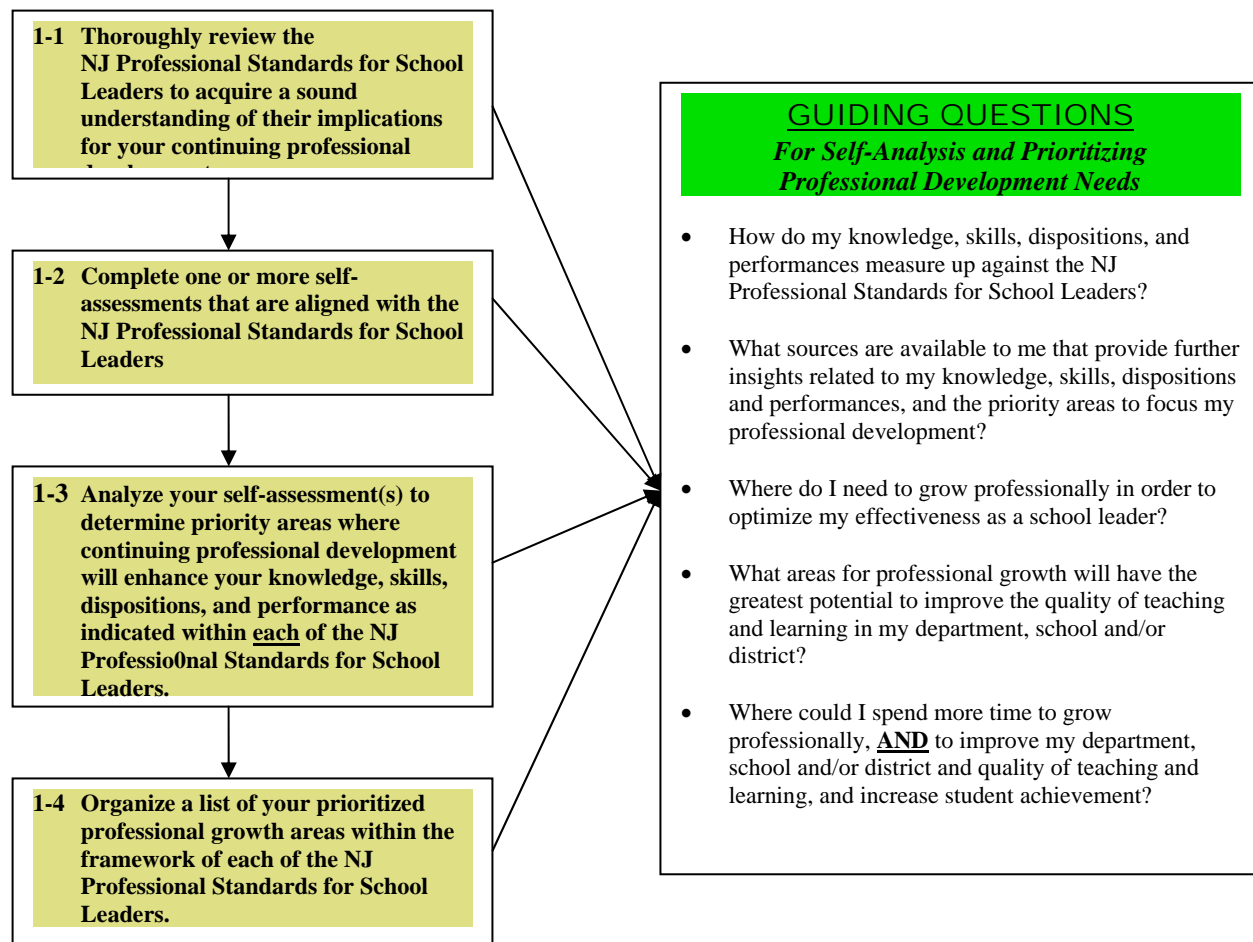
Foundation for Educational Administration ([www.featraining.org](http://www.featraining.org))

New Jersey Association for School Administrators ([www.njasa.net](http://www.njasa.net))

*enGauge Proficiencies for Educators and Administrators* (<http://engauge.ncrel.org>)

*ISLLC School Leaders Self Inventory*. Council of Chief State School Officers. Attn: Publications (FAX 202-408-8072)

ISTE – National Education Technology Standards ([www.iste.org](http://www.iste.org))



**TIPS**

- Supplement the results of your self-assessment with feedback that you may have received formally and informally from colleagues, community members, parents, students, or others who may be a part of your school community.

## STEP #2

### ASSESSING DISTRICT/SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT NEEDS: LINKING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO IMPROVEMENT GOALS

#### Overview

In determining your professional development goals and preparing your Professional Growth Plan (PGP), it is important to consider the needs and goals of your department, school and/or district to improve teaching and learning, and to increase student achievement. To determine those needs, you may want to consider district and/or school-level goals, district strategic plans adopted by the board of education, school improvement plans, state or federally mandated goal setting requirements (i.e. the Quality Assurance Annual Report, Multi-year Equity Plan, the School Report Card, or NCLB and IDEA application goals).

You may also want to engage in discussions with others in your department, school, and/or district (i.e. staff, parents, students, and other school leaders) related to district/school needs and expectations for improving programs, schools, teaching and learning. It may also be helpful to survey your colleagues to determine how they are approaching their professional development goal setting, and to consider how your individual professional development goals might complement those of other school leaders with whom you work. This may lead to opportunities to collaborate and support each other as you develop and implement your Professional Growth Plan (PGP).

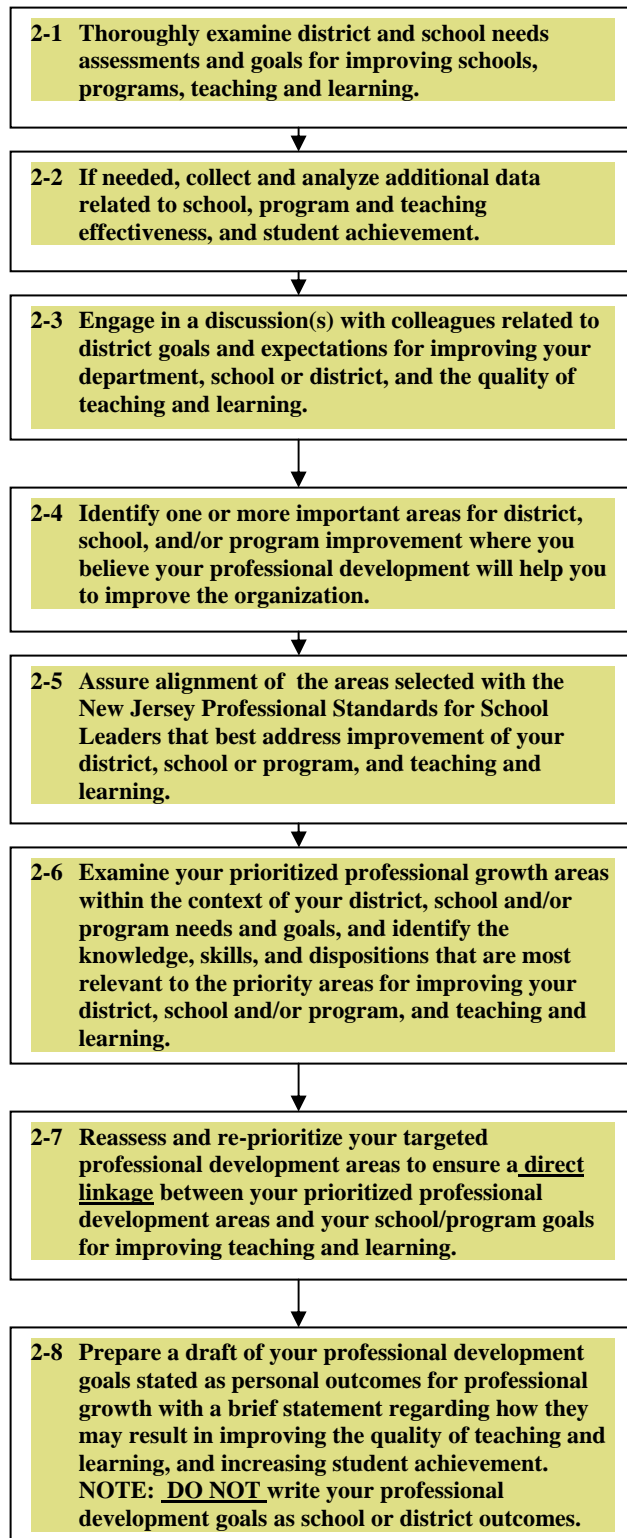
After collecting and analyzing this data, it will be helpful to identify one or more important areas for program, school and/or district improvement that have the potential to be positively impacted by your continuing professional growth. Examine your list carefully and, if necessary, add to the list of your prioritized professional development needs from Step #1. Then re-examine and re-prioritize your professional development needs, if necessary, to determine the closest alignment with district and school needs and goals for improving the quality of teaching and learning and increasing student achievement.

When this alignment is assured, prepare a draft of your professional development goals as personal outcomes for professional growth and prepare a brief rationale for how they may result in improved teaching and learning and increased student achievement.

#### KEY RESOURCES

Foundation for Educational Administration ([www.featraining.org](http://www.featraining.org))

New Jersey Association for School Administrators ([www.njasa.net](http://www.njasa.net))



**TIPS**  
*Possible Sources for Assessing  
Department/School/District Needs*

- Program/school/district goals in strategic plans adopted by the board of education;
- School improvement plans;
- Annual state-mandated goals required in district reports (i.e. QAAR, Multi-Year Equity plan, Five Year Facility plan, audit reports);
- Annual federally mandated goal setting required as part of federal funding applications (i.e. NCLB, IDEA);
- State or federally mandated review processes, monitoring or audits resulting in recommendations or corrective actions;
- Elective accreditation processes resulting in specific recommendations for improvement (i.e. Middle States, NSSE Study Evaluations, award applications)

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

- Which of my personal goals are most directly related to improving my district, school, or department and the quality of teaching and learning, and increasing student achievement?
- How are my professional development goals aligned with the goals I have identified as program, school, and/or district improvement goals?
- For which of these goals can I identify reasonable outcomes, artifacts, measures, or products that will serve as evidence of my professional growth?
- How may these goals complement the professional development goals of other school leaders in the district or other districts to open opportunities for collaboration and collegial support?

**EXAMPLE**

Sample Professional Growth Plan

### STEP #3

#### DEVELOPING YOUR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN (PGP)

##### Overview

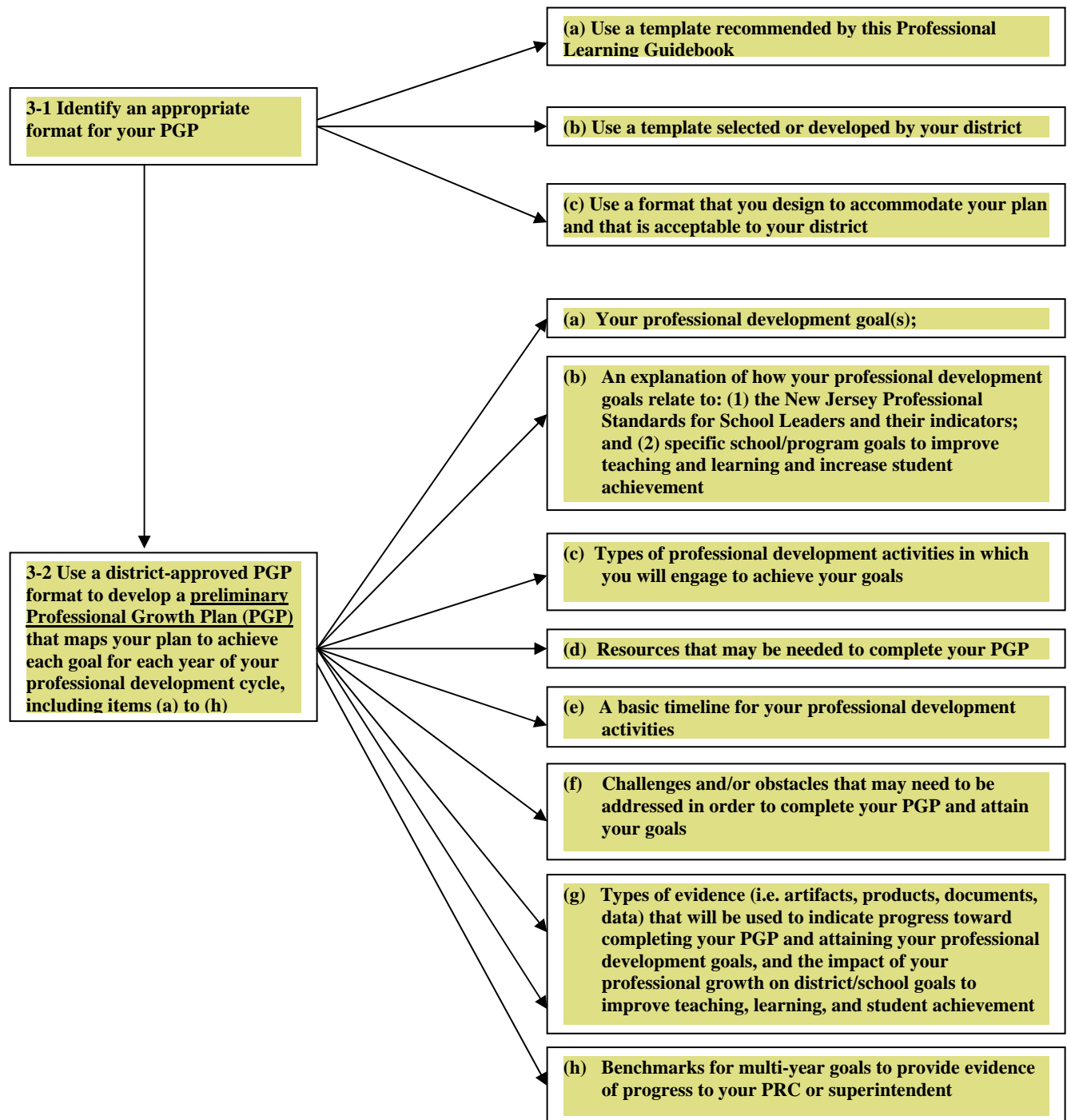
The next step in the process is to develop a draft of your Professional Growth Plan (PGP) using a template recommended by the Professional Learning Guide or developed by your district, or a format that you design to accommodate your plan that is acceptable to your district.

It will be helpful, for future reference, to prepare a brief explanation regarding how your goals were selected and how they relate to program/school or district needs. The PGP should include: (1) activities you are proposing to engage in to address your goals; (2) a preliminary list of “evidence types” (i.e. artifacts, work samples, products, documents, data) that will indicate progress toward achieving your professional development goals; (3) a tentative timeline showing your proposed activities for each of the years of your professional development cycle; (4) anticipated resources that might be required to help complete your PGP and accomplish your goals; and (5) benchmarks, if any, that might be used to measure progress toward multi-year goals.

##### KEY RESOURCES

Foundation for Educational Administration ([www.featraining.org](http://www.featraining.org))

New Jersey Association for School Administrators ([www.njasa.net](http://www.njasa.net))



### GUIDING QUESTIONS

#### *For Developing Your Preliminary PGP and Evidence Types*

- What am I going to do to achieve my goals?
- What are the initial steps to begin my plan?
- What short-term (1 year or less) and long-term (2-3 years) activities should I plan to achieve each of my goals?
- What district and school resources will I need?
- How will I make the time to do what I plan?
- What evidence will I need to collect (short- and long-term) to demonstrate fulfillment of my plan and achievement of my professional development goals?
- How will I organize my evidence?
- What are my timelines for professional development activities and outcomes (short- and long-term) over the 3-year cycle?

STEP #4  
**CONSULTING WITH YOUR SUPERINTENDENT**  
(For Those in Positions Requiring Principal or Supervisor Certification)

Overview

If you hold a position that requires principal or supervisor certification, your professional development goals and Professional Growth Plan (PGP) are to be developed in consultation with your superintendent and in accordance with state regulations and applicable district policies and procedures.

The purpose of the meeting(s) between you and your superintendent is to review your professional development goals and PGP, and to determine the potential for those goals to enhance your leadership practice and positive impact on improving teaching and learning and student achievement in your program, school or district.

It is important that both you and your superintendent enter these discussions with open minds, a spirit of collegiality and collaboration, and with adequate preparation. Arriving at meaningful consensus on your professional development goals and PGP is critically important the success of the process.

It will be helpful to carefully prepare the draft of your professional development goals and PGP for consultation with your superintendent. It is intended that you and your superintendent reach consensus on your goals and PGP. Once that is accomplished, you will then also submit your professional development goals and PGP to your self-selected Peer Review Committee (PRC), which will: (1) provide additional feedback and ongoing support related to the development and implementation of your PGP; (2) review progress toward attainment of your professional development goals; and (3) determine compliance with state standards and established guidelines (see Step #5 and Step #6).

KEY RESOURCES

Foundation for Educational Administration ([www.featraining.org](http://www.featraining.org))

New Jersey Association for School Administrators ([www.njasa.net](http://www.njasa.net))

#### 4-1 Prepare for consultation with your superintendent in accordance with state regulations and district policies.

##### TIPS

###### *For Superintendents to Prepare for Consultation*

- Provide sufficient time for each meeting and schedule them in advance so that the school leader can adequately prepare for the consultation.
- The agenda for the consultation meeting should provide for a discussion of the school leader's goals and their importance to the professional development for the individual, AND their potential impact on enhancing his/her leadership practice and achieving district, school, and/or program goals to improve teaching and learning and increase student achievement.
- Anticipate questions and concerns that the school leader may have about the process.
- Review district/school/program goals in advance and consider how they might be linked to the professional development goals of each school leader.
- Be prepared to assess how specific activities and timelines might be structured to achieve these goals.
- Consider the types and nature of evidence that you would prefer to be collected as indicators of progress toward or attainment of goals.
- Be prepared to discuss the nature and scope of resources and support that the district might provide.
- Suggest items that the school leader may wish to discuss with members of his/her Peer Review Committee.

##### TIPS

###### *For Principals and Supervisors to Prepare for Consultation*

- Carefully prepare a draft of your professional development goals and PGP.
- Consider how your professional development goals can be connected to district/school/program goals to improve the quality of teaching and learning and student achievement.
- Prepare some notes in advance to keep you focused on the key points of the presentation of your draft PGP.
- Anticipate questions that your superintendent might ask.
- Identify any supplemental information to bring with you, if needed.
- Be prepared to present specific activities and timelines related to how you plan to accomplish your goals.
- Be ready to describe the types of evidence that you plan to collect and present to demonstrate your professional growth.
- Develop a list of resources and types of support that may be required to achieve your goals.
- Describe the type and nature of feedback and support you will be requesting from your Peer Review Committee.
- Be ready to provide responses to questions and solutions to problems.

#### 4-2 Conduct the consultation as a collegial and collaborative discussion of mutual goals.

##### TIPS

###### *For Superintendents for the Consultation With Principals and Supervisors*

- Review district/school/program goals and the ways in which you would like the school leader to use his/her individualized PGP to support these goals.
- Take notes during the meeting to reflect the items discussed and the areas of agreement reached.
- Respond to all questions clearly and succinctly.

##### TIPS

###### *For Principals and Supervisors for the Consultation With the Superintendent*

- Explain the process used to select your professional development goals and how they relate to school, district, and/or program improvement goals.
- Emphasize how you will collect and present evidence of your progress toward goal attainment.
- Take notes during the meeting to reflect the items discussed and the areas of agreement reached.

#### 4-3 At the conclusion of the meeting, both parties summarize their understanding of what has been agreed upon and the actions that will follow on both parts regarding modifications to the PGP and the final certification of the PGP's development and successful completion.

#### 4-4 The superintendent will provide documentation of the consultation and mutual agreement in accordance with district policies and procedures.



STEP #5  
SELECT YOUR PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE (PRC)

Overview

All school leaders in positions that require school administrator, principal, or supervisor certification will utilize a collaborative peer review process to support the creation, implementation, and certification of their Professional Growth Plans (PGPs). In all cases, the role of the Peer Review Committee (PRC) is to provide ongoing support and feedback related to the development and implementation of your PGP and progress toward attainment of your professional development goals.

In general, you should consider the overall composition of your PRC based on the kinds of expertise and experience that will provide you with the greatest amount of guidance and support. The quality of the individuals you select to comprise your Peer Review Committee is a critical factor since they will potentially affect the effectiveness of the peer review process, the quality of the collaborative experience, and the collegial support you will receive throughout the process. Thus, care should be taken in selecting your PRC members to ensure that the PRC can effectively provide the guidance and support you may need.

KEY RESOURCES

Foundation for Educational Administration ([www.featraining.org](http://www.featraining.org))

New Jersey Association for School Administrators ([www.njasa.net](http://www.njasa.net))

**5-1 Think carefully about the role of your PRC and how it can be most helpful to you.**

**5-2**

**Consider the overall composition of your PRC based on what will provide you with the greatest amount of guidance and support.**

**5-3**

**The quality of the individuals you select for your PRC is critical to the quality of the collaborative experience and the collegial support you will need throughout the process, so select your PRC members carefully keeping in mind the qualities of effective collaborators and team members.**

### TIPS

#### *To Consider*

#### *For the Overall Composition of the PRC*

- When selecting members for your PRC, consider choosing individuals who represent different leadership positions from your own and/or have specific areas of expertise relevant to your professional development goals (i.e. specific content areas, technology);
- When selecting members for your PRC, consider choosing individuals who demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are necessary for collaboration, effective teamwork, constructive feedback, and collegial support;
- An in-district PRC can have the advantage of a common understanding of the district context and goals, which can facilitate interactions and shared work around common goals that are consistent with district goals;
- Involvement of individuals from outside the district on the PRC may introduce new thinking and strategies that may not be considered in the familiar culture of your district.
- The size of your PRC should be large enough to provide the range of expertise you need for effective feedback, yet it should be small enough to stimulate and maintain active, collegial working group that actively engages ALL individuals in the collaborative process;
- Practical considerations (i.e. availability for meetings, time, and travel) may limit the pool of candidates for your PRC.

### TIPS

#### *For Selecting PRC Members*

#### Effective PRC Members:

- Understand effective leadership practice and have educational leadership experience;
- Understand and are committed to the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders and the importance of placing teaching and learning at the core of the school leaders' work;
- Understand and are committed to the collaborative peer-review process as a valuable tool in continuing professional development;
- Can effectively provide constructive feedback, creative ideas, and guidance as you work to achieve your professional goals;
- Have your trust so that you can candidly express your opinions about professional and school-related problems, issues, and concerns;
- Are committed to continuing professional development for school leaders;
- Will devote the necessary time to the collaborative process and will actively serve on your PRC as supportive colleagues and "critical friends";
- Can and will review problems from different perspectives;
- Have expertise in specific areas of the knowledge and skills required for effective educational leadership;
- Can conscientiously critique your plan and provide constructive feedback that is focused on your goals;
- Can create and sustain an environment in which all PRC members feel comfortable in discussing important issues and personal perspectives, and feel safe taking intellectual risks;
- Can effectively interact with you and other members of the PRC so that all are committed to the process, work collaboratively and constructively, and maintain confidentiality.

## STEP #6

### CONVENE and STRUCTURE YOUR PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE (PRC)

#### Overview

At your initial Peer Review Committee meeting, it will be important that you and your PRC members begin to develop a common understanding of the collaborative peer review process and the nature and types of support that you need and will expect from them. As with any important meeting, be prepared to provide a brief outline of the topics you plan to discuss, including a discussion of the types of feedback, assistance and recommendations that you would like from your PRC. Use your first PRC meeting to review your professional development goals and your preliminary Professional Growth Plan (PGP), and to solicit feedback regarding how your PGP may be improved and implemented. At this meeting, also present a list of the types of evidence that may be collected for subsequent review of your progress toward completion of your PGP and attainment of your goals.

The PRC must meet at least once to review and provide feedback on your PGP. You and your PRC may decide to meet and/or communicate on a regular basis to provide ongoing support and feedback regarding implementation of your PGP and progress toward attainment of your professional development goals. The extent to which your PRC is actively engaged in working with you on your PGP will vary based on your personal needs, district policies and procedures, and practical considerations. In any event, you are encouraged to engage in ongoing communications with your PRC using a variety of methods.

Several important differences in the peer review process for each group should be noted.

#### For individuals in positions requiring school administrator certification:

- Professional Growth Plans must be developed in consultation with a self-selected PRC consisting of three or more peers;
- The PRC will be responsible for reviewing implementation of the PGP and progress toward goal attainment;
- At the end of the three to five year professional development cycle, the PRC will recommend certification of PGP completion to the NJASA, which is responsible for coordinating the peer review process and certifying successful completion of the PGP.

#### For individuals in positions requiring principal and supervisor certification:

- Professional development goals will be identified in consultation with the superintendent;
- Professional Growth Plans will be submitted to a self-selected PRC comprised of three or more peers for feedback and reviews to assure compliance with the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders and state professional development requirements.

## KEY RESOURCES

Foundation for Educational Administration ([www.featraining.org](http://www.featraining.org))

New Jersey Association for School Administrators ([www.njasa.net](http://www.njasa.net))

**6-1 In preparing to convene your first PRC meeting, be sure to consider key points related to structure and organization.**



**6-2 At your first PRC meeting, begin to develop a common understanding of critical areas with your PRC members**



**6-3 At your first PRC meeting, present a draft of your professional development goals and Professional Growth Plan for review and feedback having the members use guiding questions that they have developed.**



**6-4 Based on PRC feedback, modify your preliminary professional development goals and Professional Growth Plan as needed for further consultation with your **superintendent** OR **Peer Review Committee**, as applicable.**



**6.5 Implement your Professional Growth Plan.**

**TIPS**  
*To Consider for PRC Structure and Organization*

- Roles and responsibilities of PRC members;
- Meeting schedules and logistics;
- Use of electronic and other forms of communication;
- Format and guidelines for meetings, reviews and debriefings, feedback; sharing information; meeting notes;
- General format, focus, and content of Professional Growth Plans;
- Types of evidence and feedback that will support completion of the professional growth plan and achievement of professional development goals.

**TIPS**  
*Critical Areas to Develop Common Understandings Among PRC Members*

- New Jersey's professional development requirement for school leaders;
- The NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders;
- The context of the school district and community, and of your school/program within that context;
- Your district/school/program goals for improving teaching and learning;
- Relevant issues, challenges, and obstacles that may impede completion of your PGP and attainment of your goals.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**  
*For PRC Review of the Professional Growth Plan*

- Are your professional development goals described in terms of outcomes for your professional growth, yet clearly linked to goals for improving your district/school/program, teaching, and learning?
- Are your professional development goals and plan meaningful to you?
- Are your professional development goals reasonable (e.g. within your span of control and possible within your professional development cycle)?
- Is sufficient detail provided?
- Is your PGP clearly framed by the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders?
- Will products and other evidence clearly be collected as part of your PGP?
- Are your professional development goals and activities explicitly tied to school improvement plans and district goals?
- Is the plan manageable?

**6-6 Maintain ongoing meetings and communications with your PRC members as appropriate and necessary.**

(a) Briefly review the norms and procedures for PRC meetings at the beginning of each meeting.

(b) Review PRC Responsibilities

(c) Present evidence of progress toward completion of your PGP and goal attainment to your PRC.

(d) Explain how the evidence and the related actions on your part address your professional development goals, and describe your progress toward these goals.

**Reminder:** Your evidence must be framed by your professional development goals and the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders, and explicitly linked to district and school goals for improving schools, teaching, and learning.

(e) At the end of the meeting, summarize the meeting and the actions you or other PRC members will take or consider as a result.

(g) You and your PRC members should take some time to debrief on the meeting process to ensure that you are optimizing PRC time and the support and guidance provided.

(f) After each meeting, prepare the following: (1) a brief written summary of the meeting; (2) the evidence presented and reviewed; (3) a reflection for your records that includes what you learned from the meeting; and (4) changes you may make to your evidence, professional development goals and plan.

TIPS

*For Your PRC Members*

- Ask probing questions for clarification.
- Focus on your progress toward your professional development goals.
- Carefully read, review and analyze the evidence you present.
- Provide feedback that is framed by your professional development goals and the indicators identified by the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders.
- Provide balanced feedback that identifies and reinforces what you are doing well, and also identifies and explores areas that you may need to address further.
- Provide recommendations for modifications to your professional development goals, Professional Growth Plan, and your continuing professional development activities.

TIPS

*For Working With Your PRC*

- Focus your PRC members on the specific feedback that you feel would be most helpful to you.
- Ask clarifying questions of your PRC members so that you fully understand their feedback and recommendations.
- Monitor the balance of feedback with your PRC members, which requires that everyone: (1) is candid yet supportive in an atmosphere of mutual respect; (2) encourages openness and risk-taking; (3) raises difficult issues; and (4) asks difficult questions.
- Be careful that PRC members do not become so engaged in specific issues that they drift from a focus on reviewing your progress toward completion of your plan and attainment of your professional development goals.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

*For PRC Debriefing*

Did we:

- Stay on topic?
- Make effective use of time?
- Follow our rules?
- Stay focused on professional development?
- Address appropriate indicators in the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders?
- Provide helpful feedback?
- Hear from everyone in the discussion?
- Document feedback and recommendations?
- Determine how to continuously improve our process?

STEP #7  
COLLECTING and ORGANIZING EVIDENCE  
of PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN COMPLETION

Overview

If you are in a position that requires principal and supervisor certification, your Professional Growth Plans (PGPs) and evidence of their implementation may be periodically reviewed with their superintendent and/or the Peer Review Committees (PRCs).

If you are in a position requiring the school administrator certification, periodic reviews will be conducted by their PRCs and coordinated by the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA).

You should consider at what points in the implementation of your PGP it would be most helpful to have periodic reviews of your professional development goals and PGP. These periodic reviews will provide an opportunity for you to present, discuss and obtain feedback related to:

- Evidence you present related to progress toward completion of your PGP and goal attainment;
- Revisions to your PGP that reflect new information related to your professional development goals, changing job circumstances, or emerging school or district needs.

The identification, collection, and organization of evidence in support of your PGP completion and goal attainment is extremely important. “Evidence” of professional growth plan fulfillment refers to artifacts, products, documents, and data that illustrate the work that you are doing, the outcomes of your professional development, and progress toward achievement of your professional development goals. Regarding evidence that you may collect, you should consider the following questions related to your professional growth and its impact on improving teaching and learning:

- What evidence will best demonstrate progress toward completion of your PGP and achievement of your goals?
- What will be the outcomes from the activities included in your PGP?
- What evidence will best demonstrate those outcomes and their impact on district, school or program goals for improving teaching and learning, and increasing student achievement?
- What evidence will best demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions indicated in the New Jersey Standards for School Leaders?

KEY RESOURCES

Foundation for Educational Administration ([www.featraining.org](http://www.featraining.org))

New Jersey Association for School Administrators ([www.njasa.net](http://www.njasa.net))

**7-1 Identify and collect the types of evidence that will best demonstrate fulfillment of your PGP and achievement of your professional development goals.**

**7-2 Determine how you will organize your evidence as you collect it**

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS** ***For Organizing Evidence***

- How will you organize your evidence?
- How can your evidence best be organized to present to your PRC for periodic reviews and feedback?
- How can your evidence best be organized to present to your **superintendent OR PRC**, as applicable, for review and certification of fulfillment of your PGP?
- What are some options for organizing your evidence (e.g. file folders, binders, electronic formats, and portfolio)?
- Do you have specific artifacts and reflective commentaries to serve as a basis for your PRC meeting? Are the artifacts connected to your professional development goals and activities?
- Do your artifacts and commentaries illustrate ways in which you have grown professionally with respect to your professional development goals?
- Are your artifacts and commentaries substantive enough to provide an opportunity for your PRC to review and provide constructive feedback?

### **TIPS**

#### **Your Evidence Should:**

- Reflect the knowledge, skills and performances that you have identified in your professional development goals as indicated by the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders;
- Serve as a basis for self-reflection on your professional growth and continuing professional development and feedback from your PRC;
- Be directly relevant to your professional development goals and substantive enough to stimulate discussion and feedback from your PRC;
- Include “end products” of completed work that illustrate results/outcomes of your continuing professional growth;
- Be viewed as “works in progress” since they are primarily intended to illustrate how you are continually working toward your professional development goals, and how your professional growth is enhancing your ability to address issues and challenges related to improving schools, teaching and learning, and student achievement.

#### **EXAMPLES of “EVIDENCE”:**

- Documentation related to professional development activities and relevant job-embedded experiences;
- Documentation of meetings and presentations and their outcomes;
- Videotapes of you “in action, on-the-job”;
- Memoranda and reports demonstrating how you successfully addressed difficult situations.

### **TIPS**

#### ***For Collecting and Organizing Evidence***

#### **KEEP IT MANAGEABLE:**

- Do not overwrite or waste time polishing your evidence for your PRC. Write when it focuses your thinking and enhances the quality of your reflection and clarity of your evidence;
- Keep in mind that your evidence is considered “work in progress”, so any products you develop for purposes of review by your PRC should be viewed as drafts or samples of documents where it is understood that you may make reflections or changes as marginal notes and continually improve on the evidence presented;
- Include existing documents that exemplify your progress toward your professional development goals (e.g. memoranda, meeting agenda);
- Do not collect more evidence than is needed to support your progress toward or achievement of your professional development goals.

**FOCUS:** Select specific artifacts for each PRC meeting with brief personal reflections to help focus the discussion on areas that you feel are important. Use bulleted lists for reflections and discussion points.

**REFLECT:** Written reflections on your evidence and their connections to completion of your PGP and achievement of your professional development goals are critical to how effectively your PRC will review your progress and provide constructive feedback.

## STEP #8

### PRESENTING EVIDENCE of PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

#### Overview

You are required to provide evidence of completion of your Professional Growth Plan (PGP) and progress toward attainment of your professional development goals.

State regulations require documentation of professional development activities and a summative narrative account detailing attainment of your professional development goals at the end of your professional development cycle to support certification of completion of your PGP. The process for certification of PGP completion varies as follows:

- Those in positions requiring school administrator certification are required to provide evidence of completion of their PGPs to their Peer Review Committee at the end of a three to five year cycle depending upon the individual's contract with the district board of education. The New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA) is responsible for certifying completion of the PGP to both the New Jersey Department of Education and their local board of education.
- For those in positions requiring principal and supervisor certification, the PGP will be certified by their superintendent to the New Jersey Department of Education at the conclusion of each three year professional development cycle.

As you consider your summative narrative account to be presented as part of the evidence of PGP completion, you may want to consider the following questions:

- How were your professional development goals selected?
- How did your professional development goals relate to district/school/program improvement goals?
- How were your goals and Professional Growth Plan affected by peer review and/or [feedback from your superintendent](#)?
- How effective were your professional development and implementation activities in achieving your outcomes?
- What evidence do you have to support completion of your PGP, your outcomes, and attainment of your goals?
- How satisfied were you overall with your progress toward attaining your professional development goals?
- What next steps do you plan to take as you plan for your next professional development cycle?

#### KEY RESOURCES

Foundation for Educational Administration ([www.featraining.org](http://www.featraining.org))

New Jersey Association for School Administrators ([www.njasa.net](http://www.njasa.net))



### 8-1 Presenting evidence to your PRC

(a) Plan your PRC meetings and ongoing communications to present your evidence and obtain thoughtful critical analysis and feedback of your progress toward your professional development goals and PGP completion

(b) Focus your PRC and the ongoing review process on your professional development as you engage in efforts to improve teaching and learning.

(c) At the end of each PRC meeting, document discussions and results, including:

- A description of the evidence and what you did in response to your professional development goals; important notes related to your PRC's review of your PGP, and any modifications you make as a result of the PRC's feedback; and
- A critique that describes the evidence and how it supports your PGP completion and progress toward your professional development goals.

### 8-2 Presenting evidence of PGP completion

(a) Present evidence of your Professional Growth Plan at the end of each professional development cycle to certify fulfillment of the requirement **to your superintendent OR to your PRC, as applicable.**

(b) Write a narrative account using examples from your evidence to illustrate how you have grown professionally.

(c) Following certification of your plan, develop a preliminary revised professional growth plan for the next professional development cycle.

### 8-3 Certification of PGP Completion

(a) By your superintendent to the NJDOE

(b) By NJASA, upon recommendation of your PRC, to the NJDOE and your BOE

### TIPS

#### For Presenting Evidence to Your PRC

- **Thoughtfully and carefully organize and present your evidence of professional growth:** Your organization will help maximize your PRC's focus and meeting time and communications;
- **Focus their analysis:** On your presentation of your evidence;
- **Establish objectives, outcomes and timelines with your PRC and stick to them**
- **Frame Your Presentation:** The NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders must be the lens through which your PRC reviews and critiques your work. Therefore, presentation of your artifacts should be framed in terms of state standards and the specific indicators highlighted in your Professional Growth Plan.
- **Stay on topic:** The structures and process for your PRC's review and feedback must be consistently reinforced to ensure that the PRC's time and process remain focused on your evidence and professional development goals, the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders and indicators, and the desired outcome of the meeting;
- **Stay focused on the desired outcome:** At the beginning of each PRC meeting, a clear outcome for the meeting must be identified related to the critical analysis of your evidence of professional growth, and progress toward that outcome must be maintained throughout the meeting;
- **Plan to keep it meaningful:** Written artifacts and reflections are at the heart of the process, so you should carefully and thoughtfully select, prepare, and plan for presentation of the evidence and reflections that you want to review and discuss at your meetings;
- **Encourage quality feedback:** Let your PRC know that you expect candor and constructive feedback, and that they should be prepared to commend good work, suggest new or alternate directions, and identify potential problems that you may encounter;
- **Encourage probing questions:** Let your PRC know that you welcome the opportunity to provide details related to your professional development goals;
- **Examine Critical Issues:** Use the PRC to help you examine critical issues and challenges;
- **Solicit Help:** Have the PRC assist you to identify ways to further your professional development and overcome challenges to achieving your goals;
- **Problem Solving:** You may present a problem you are encountering and ask your PRC to help you think through your plan of action.

### TIPS

#### For Writing Your Narrative Account

#### Your Narrative Account Should:

- Be based on the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders and its related indicators;
- Focus on what you have accomplished during the your professional development cycle and how you know that you have enhanced your knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performances;
- Document the critique of the evidence by the PRC, minimally including an analysis of what you believe is necessary to strengthen your professional development as a result of the PRC's feedback, and why it is necessary;
- Include a summary of what will be done next and why.

## STEP #9

### PREPARING for YOUR NEXT YEAR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

#### Overview

Professional growth is a continuous process. The completion of your Professional Growth Plan is not an end in itself but a new beginning that provides more opportunities to address new, continuing, or revised personal development goals. As the knowledge base for the education profession and educational leadership continues to expand and as the responsibilities of being a school leader continually evolve to meet ever-changing environmental conditions, each professional development cycle brings new opportunities to enhance your leadership practice.

It is important to assess your professional growth, and to re-assess your Professional Growth Plan (PGP) at the end of each professional development cycle in order to identify and celebrate progress toward and/or attainment of personal and program, school, or district goals. It is equally important to review those goals that are not fully attained to determine the reasons, and to decide if they should continue to be included in the next professional development cycle, in the same or modified form.

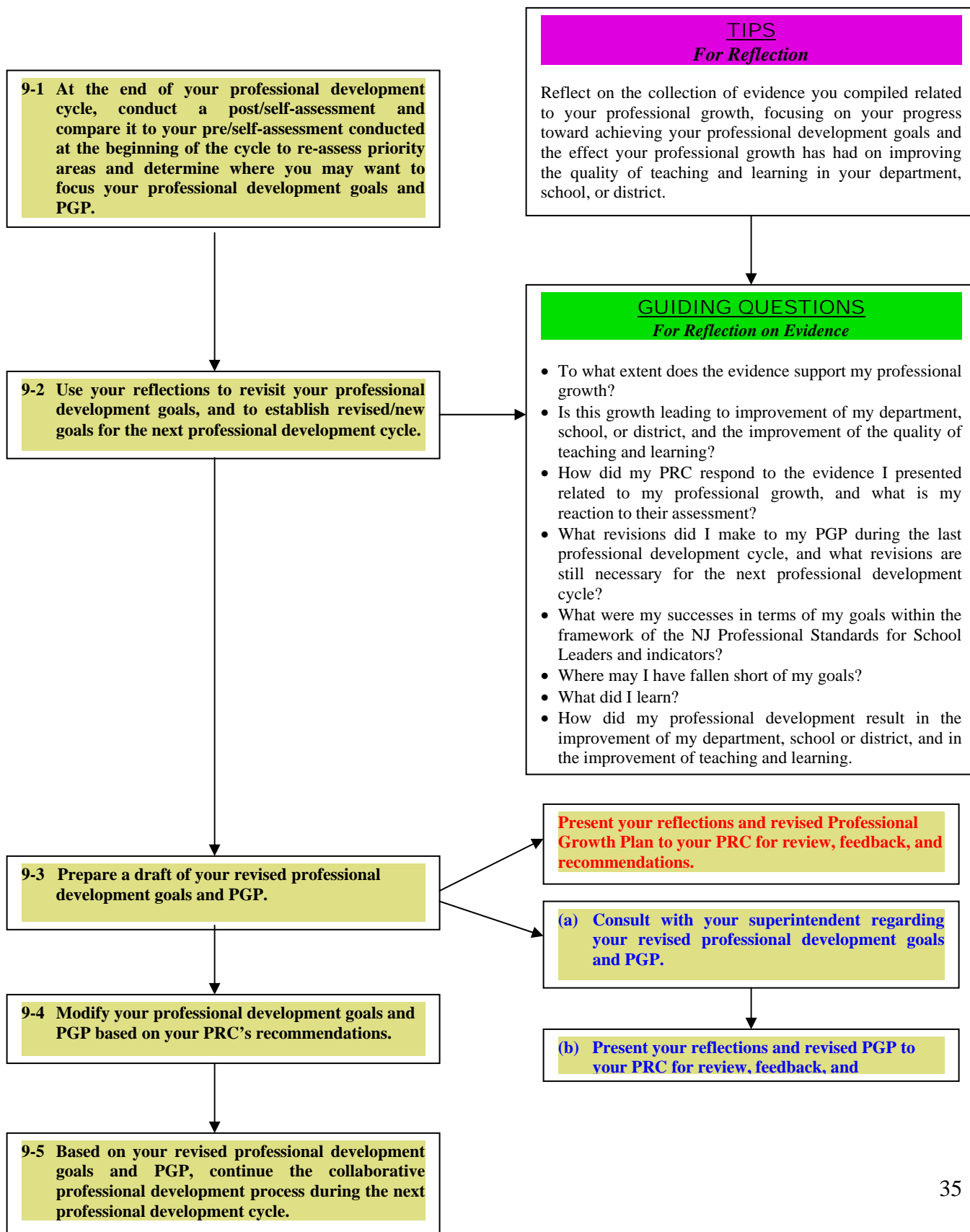
It is also important that you consider what you have learned from completion of your PGP and determine how the school or district has been positively impacted by your professional growth. You will want to build upon your successes in the next professional development cycle.

With each professional development cycle, you will feel more comfortable with the process of individualized professional goal setting and planning, collaborating with peers, and aligning individual professional development goals with district and school goals for improving the quality of teaching and learning and increasing student achievement.

#### KEY RESOURCES

Foundation for Educational Administration ([www.featraining.org](http://www.featraining.org))

New Jersey Association for School Administrators ([www.njasa.net](http://www.njasa.net))



## SECTION VIII

### RESOURCES and IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

**(UNDER DEVELOPMENT)**

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Summary of Subchapter 16 6A:9-16.1-6

#### **6A:9-16.1**

Subchapter 16 Required Professional Development for School Leaders provides for the implementation of required standards based professional development for school leaders. The requirement applies to all active school leaders whose positions require possession of the chief school administrator, principal, or supervisor certificate.

The plan originally scheduled for implementation in September 2004 will be implemented at the conclusion of the developmental year (school year 04-05) resulting in the implementation of professional growth plans beginning July 1, 2005.

The code applies to all public school district, charter schools and non-public schools whose staff hold positions which require the possession of chief school administrator, principal or supervisor certificates.

#### **6A:9-16.2**

A State Advisory Committee on Professional development for School Leaders has been established to advise the Commissioner on the implementation of the regulations and to advise, establish and recommend; implementation standards and schedule, guidelines for peer review, frameworks for professional development planning, funding, and evaluation of the initiative.

The Advisory Committee is comprised of eleven members nominated by the professional associations including three principals, three chief school administrators, two supervisors, one teacher, one representative from higher education and a board of education member.

#### **6A:9-16.3**

Every school leader is required to develop, implement and complete an individualized professional growth plan that is aligned with the state standards for school leaders and will identify personal professional goals that address specific district or school needs. The plans will focus on improving teaching and learning and increasing student achievement.

Evidence of the plans completion will be required. Such evidence will include; a narrative account of the plans achievement and documentation related to the activities engaged in as part of the plan.

#### **6A:9-16.4**

Chief school administrators will develop their professional growth plans with the assistance of a peer review committee. The role of the peer review committee will be to provide support, review progress and recommend certification of the successful completion of the plan. Chief school administrators will provide evidence of completion of their plans to a peer review team every three to five years. The New Jersey Association of School administrators will coordinate the peer review process, certify completion of the growth plans and provide documentation to the school administrator's board of education.

#### **6A:9-16.5**

Plans for principals and supervisors will be developed in conjunction with the chief school administrator. After identifying goals with the chief school administrator, principals and supervisors will submit their plans to a self-selected peer review committee for review of compliance with state standards and established guidelines.

School leaders whose positions require a principal or supervisor certificate will provide evidence of completion of the plan every three years to the chief school administrator. The chief school administrator will certify the development and successful completion of the professional growth plan.

#### **6A:9-16.6**

The New Jersey Department of Education will monitor the implementation and evaluate the effectiveness of the regulations and prepare an annual report for the State Board of Education.

## APPENDIX B

### NEW JERSEY STANDARDS for SCHOOL LEADERS

[Include link to NJDOE document that lists all standards with indicators -  
<http://www.nj.gov/njded/profdev/profstand/standards.pdf> ]